

Dear Mr. Moran and Ms. Murray,

Would you please include the information below in the packet for the November 23rd City Council Meeting? Several members of GCAN (Greenbelt Climate Action Network) would like to bring this issue up during the Petitions portion of the meeting. We are asking that the **City Council write a letter to President Obama, before the upcoming climate talks in Paris, Nov 30 – Dec 11.**

<http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en> Due to the "timeliness" of the issue, we will also be requesting that the issue be moved to the agenda portion of the evening so a vote can be taken that night.

Thanks,
Lore Rosenthal & Stephanie Warner

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This December, world leaders will convene in Paris for COP21, the 21st annual meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 195 member countries of the UNFCCC are expected to adopt a new agreement that will set forth the objectives, rules, and country contributions that the world needs to address climate disruption beginning in 2020. City, state, and private sector leaders are also expected to announce a range of actions and initiatives that they will undertake to begin to address the climate crisis today.

Protecting our community and taking local action on transportation, energy efficiency, clean energy, and protecting our forests and wild lands helps put the United States on the path to make strong climate commitments this year in Paris. Your commitment will provide clear evidence that our community is ready to join others in the U.S. and worldwide to address the climate challenge, while taking action to protect local communities and grow local jobs.

Being that Greenbelt has already become certified through Sustainable Maryland Certified, recently signed on to the Compact of Mayors, already makes a yearly update of our carbon emission reductions, and was recently featured in a State Department video, we can serve as a model to our President of the commitments local governments and citizens are already taking to reduce climate change. **Attached is a list of many current initiatives in our town.**

By showing that communities across the U.S. are taking action and are ready to do more, we can build momentum following an ambitious commitment by the U.S. that will help lead to an effective outcome. Furthermore, this collaboration will highlight that **citizens and elected officials are already working together** and with others across the U.S. and the world to take local climate action and achieve the goals of the global climate deal.

Therefore, we ask you to **send a letter to President Obama, before December 11th.** We have included a **template letter you can use.**

TEMPLATE LETTER

[DATE], 2015
President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As an elected official representing **[Greenbelt, MD]**, we are writing to urge you to take the lead in moving the global community toward a strong international climate deal this December.

Climate disruption is already threatening communities here and throughout the country. From extreme weather events to increasing public health costs, it's clear that climate disruption is a crisis that needs not only a local solution but a global solution as well. The commitments made in Paris will help our country

become resilient toward climate change by cutting pollution, taking advantage of clean energy, and protecting communities that are the most vulnerable to our changing climate.

As you and your Administration prepare for the historic climate conference in Paris, we would like to highlight the local actions we have taken in *[Greenbelt, MD]* to address climate change. For example, we have taken leadership by becoming certified through Sustainable Maryland Certified. We were also featured recently in a U.S. State Department Video, showing all the ways our city government and citizens are reducing their climate emissions. .

Moreover, with Paris around the corner, we are stepping up with *[several new grants to improve our HVAC and lighting in municipal buildings.]*. We anticipate that this new initiative will greatly benefit our community by *[cost savings and serving as a model to other municipalities.]*.

Thank you for your continued leadership on climate change, and we look forward to a strong international climate commitment from the United States and the global community.

Respectfully,

LIST OF CURRENT INITIATIVES IN GREENBELT

Government

- completed "Sustainability Framework Document", Sept 2013
- became certified through "Sustainable Maryland Certified", Sept 2014
- qualified as an EPA Green Power Partner, Sept 2012
- committed to the Compact of Mayors, 2015
- featured in a recent U.S. State Department video (*waiting for link*)
<https://climate.america.gov/>
- contracts for 100% wind energy for all municipal buildings
- calculated a baseline carbon footprint and reports yearly updates
<http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/documentcenter/view/2286>
- banned styrofoam from the Labor Day Festival and city-sponsored functions
- purchased a small electric vehicle for litter pickup, May 2013
- has received several grants for outdoor lighting, pervious pavers for parking lots
- currently upgrading HVAC and light systems in municipal buildings
- built a new Department of Public Works as a Green Building
- sponsors: e-cycling, shredding, and reuse/drop off days
- has a 62% tree canopy, which aids in carbon sequestration
- published a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, Dec 2009
- advocates with WMATA for increased bus service
- Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability and Greenbelt Green Team, has 4 "circles" including: Solar Team, Zero Waste, Sustainable Land Care, Stream/Stormwater Restoration
- City Council supports State Legislative Priorities, such as Offshore Wind Energy, Community Solar, Moratorium on Fracking, Renewable Portfolio Standard
- City supports city emissions goals, Prince George's County goals, State of Maryland goals, and Council of Governments Regional Goals. <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/climate/about.asp>
- Council and staff serve on energy committees through MWCOC, Maryland Municipal League, and National League of Cities.

Citizens

- Greenbelt Climate Action Network (GCAN), holds monthly meetings with speakers and videos, tables at community events
- Reel & Meal, raises awareness through monthly videos and speakers
- Citizen Education/Discussion Circles, through GCAN, on simplicity, sustainability, climate change, going green at home, sustainable food, health and the environment
- Support of 350.org, national days of action

- Attend rallies and hearings in support of county and state legislation
- Home Salon Nights
- Street Theater at Greenbelt Labor Day Festival (Reel Mowers, Line Drying, Recycling, Rain Barrels, Electric Vehicles, Climate Solutions: Pieces of the Puzzle)
- More than 350 residents purchase wind energy
- Greenbelt Community Solar, LLC, began producing solar energy on the Greenbelt Baptist Church, Dec. 2011
- Individual homeowners have installed solar panels on their roofs
- Many residents drive Prius or other hybrid vehicles
- Several residents own electric vehicles
- GHI has established a policy for electric vehicle charging stations in residential courts
- Some residents have given up their vehicles to exclusively use bikes and public transportation
- GHI has initiated the Homes Improvement Project (Weatherization), to be completed in five years
- Residents have learned about Fossil Fuel Divestment, moving their money out of large banks, banking in local credit unions, and socially responsible investing with green companies.
- Residents serve on local "Green Teams" at their schools, churches/synagogues, universities, and places of work
- Some residents work at local climate change organizations, such as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, EPA, etc.
- Several community organizations practice "zero waste" at their events (eg, New Years Eve, Theater Opening, Crazy Quilt Wedding).
- GCAN has met with faith leaders through GILA, to encourage more emphasis on Earth Stewardship. Several congregations have hosted programs through Interfaith Power & Light, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, and Groundswell.
- CHEARS & Greenbelt Community Gardens encourage residents to grow local
- Greenbelt Farmer's Market encourages residents to buy local
- Reel & Meal and numerous festivals encourage residents to eat vegan foods
- Some residents express their concern for climate change through creative expression: making art, writing books, producing videos
- Many residents model sustainable practices, such as: using clothes lines, using reusable shopping bags, carrying water bottles and coffee mugs, growing some of their own food.